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Hopkins—Pastoral Letter. 1846.

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PASTORAL LETTER,

ADDRESSED BY

THE BISHOP

**OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE STATE
OF VERMONT,**

TO THE PEOPLE OF HIS DIOCESE,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

HIS CORRESPONDENCE

WITH THE REV. WILLIAM HENRY HOIT,

Late Rector of Union Church, St. Alban's.

Burlington:
CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.
1846.

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FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918

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PASTORAL LETTER.

BELOVED BRETHREN AND FRIENDS:

The twenty-sixth Canon of our General Convention advises that every bishop of our Church, from time to time, shall address to the people of his diocese, "Pastoral Letters on some points of Christian doctrine, worship, or manners:" a regulation of obvious propriety and importance, and strictly imperative, in my opinion, when occasions arise, on which new subjects of offence and trouble are forced upon our attention.

During the period of my episcopal jurisdiction, however, now more than thirteen years, I have not thought it necessary to adopt this mode of communicating with the Laity under my official charge, supposing it sufficient to make my annual address to our diocesan Convention the medium of my counsels; the more especially as I had published, in a variety of other forms, according to the best of my humble ability, all that I thought was due to the claims of my peculiar office, and the character of the times.

But now I find myself compelled to call on you directly for your serious and careful consideration of an event which has given me very deep affliction, and which involves principles of the gravest importance to every faithful member of the Church. The course adopted by one of our most respectable and influential clergymen, the Rev. William Henry Hoit, late rector of Union Church, St. Alban's, has obliged

me to administer an official censure ; and in obedience to the precept of the Apostle to Timothy, the bishop of Ephesus, the rebuke must be " before all, that others may hear : " an injunction which I feel to be the more necessary, because I believe the case is a new one in our history, and therefore I think the Church at large has a more than ordinary right to be fully informed concerning the whole matter.

The facts are all contained in the letters which have passed between the Rev. Mr. Hoit and myself from the 19th of February to the 21st of March last, inclusive. And although the substance of them might doubtless be advantageously compressed into a very narrow compass, yet I have thought it best, on the whole to suppress nothing on either side, so that you may be in complete possession of the entire transaction.

The correspondence accordingly is now laid before you, in full : and after you shall have carefully perused it, you will be prepared for such remarks as I consider it my duty to address to you on this (to me) most strange and unwelcome occasion.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BISHOP TO THE REV. W. H. HOIT.

BURLINGTON, VT., February 19, 1846.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have been exceedingly afflicted by a report which has reached me from several quarters, that when you left the Church, before the sermon, on the afternoon of Sunday last, you went to the Roman Catholic Chapel, crossed yourself with holy water, as it is called, and took your place among the congregation, conforming openly to their worship until the close, after which you remained conversing with the priest for a considerable time; thus giving a seeming color to the boast which he is reported to have made throughout our village, that you are a convert to that church.

In the hope that all this must involve some gross exaggeration, and desirous, as your bishop and your friend, to be able to contradict it on your own authority, I write to request an accurate statement of the truth, so that I may be furnished with the means, as well for myself as for the church under my jurisdiction, to vindicate your real position.

Commending you to the protection and guidance of Almighty God,

I remain your faithful brother in Christ,

(Signed)

JOHN H. HOPKINS.

Rev. W. H. HOIT.

REV. W. H. HOIT TO THE BISHOP.

ST. ALBAN'S, February 20th, 1846.

Right Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your communication of yesterday's date is just received, and I hasten to reply to it. The report which you detail to me is, like reports generally in such cases, partly true and in part erroneous. I attended the Vesper Service of the Roman Catholic Church in your village, and while present did what, I conceive, all persons should ever do when they attend Divine service among any class of Christian worshippers, namely, conform to the usage of the congregation around them. I took no part in the offices, had no book with me containing them, but was simply an attentive and respectful listener. When the service ended I left the house, and did not speak with the priest at all, either then or at any time during my stay in Burlington.

My motive for doing so was, frankly, that of interest to see something practically of the services of the Roman Catholic Church; into whose history, character, claims, doctrines, usages, &c., I am at the present time making very diligent and earnest inquiry. As I have ceased to be a parish priest, or to exercise the public functions of the Protestant Episcopal Ministry for the present, and as a passing sojourner in your place had attended both the morning and evening offices of our church, I did not think that I was doing wrong thus to avail myself of the opportunity to gain information which I desired.

Trusting that this explanation may prove satisfactory to you,

I remain, yours, very truly,

(Signed)

WM. HENRY HOIT.

Rt. Rev. J. H. HOPKINS, D. D. }
Burlington, Vt. }

THE BISHOP TO THE REV. W. H. HOIT.

BURLINGTON, VT. February 24th, 1846.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your letter has been received, and has given me much sorrow. Nevertheless, before I feel qualified to state my opinion at large in relation to the matter, I would desire to be informed more particularly about some details which might affect the complexion of the act in a sober judgment.

Be pleased therefore to let me know whether you used, on entering or leaving the Roman Catholic Chapel, or both at your entrance and departure, the sign of the cross with their holy water, or sprinkled yourself in any way with the holy water, as is sometimes their custom?

In what part of the Chapel did you seat yourself? Whether in a conspicuous place in the eye of general observation, or far back, as those commonly do who come to be mere spectators?

How far did you openly take part in the worship? Did you visibly accompany them in kneeling, &c., or sit still in the manner of an ordinary looker on?

You will at once perceive by these inquiries that I wish to understand the precise aspect of the case, either as a visit of simple curiosity, or an act of open participation. I might infer the latter from some expressions in your communication, but I do not feel willing to risk the slightest injustice by conjecture.

Faithfully and affectionately,

Your friend and brother in Christ,

(Signed)

JOHN H. HOPKINS.

Rev. Wm. H. HOIT.

REV. W. H. HOIT TO THE BISHOP.

ST. ALBANS, February 26th, 1846.

Right Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have just received your communication of the 24th instant, and, permit me to add, with much surprise. I was surprised, indeed, at your previous letter,—surprised that you should make such a matter one of inquiry at all. But as I regarded it rather in the light of friendly and personal interest towards me, than that of official notice, I gave it a frank and respectful reply. But your present communication seems to pursue the subject as though it were matter of Episcopal investigation. My dear sir, have I offended against any canon or law of our church? Whatever answer I might return to the singular inquiries you have put to me, whether affirmative or negative, would it all matter between us so far as our respective ecclesiastical relations are concerned? I have not the slightest objection in the world to your knowing all and everything I did in the matter; but I certainly do object, respectfully yet firmly, to having such a matter made one of such inquiries. It would be subjecting the clergy of our Protestant Episcopal Church to such a supervision of their private personal conduct as they have never heretofore known; such as no laws of our church (I conceive) warrant; and such as they would universally object to, I doubt not, until it were removed from the province of mere personal will or caprice in our Bishops, to that of well-defined and written law.

Trusting that, upon further reflection, you will think best to let the whole matter drop where it is, I remain, Right Reverend and dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

(Signed)

WM. HENRY HOIT.

Right Rev. BISHOP HOPKINS.

THE BISHOP TO THE REV. W. H. HOIT.

BURLINGTON, VT., February 26, 1846.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Almost immediately after I had despatched my last communication, another report in which your name is concerned demanded my attention. It was said that the Rev. Mr. O'Callaghan, the Roman Catholic priest of this place, had stated his intention to baptize you and your family on his late visit to St. Alban's, and as some related the matter, that he *had actually baptized you*. Conceiving myself authorized to assume that the

priest had never said either the one or the other, and that he would readily disclaim them both if he had the opportunity, I addressed the following note to him through the Post-Office :—

BURLINGTON, VT., February 24, 1846.

Reverend Sir,

It has been reported to me that you stated some two months ago, (the time, however, is immaterial,) that you expected to administer Baptism to the Rev. Wm. H. Hoit of St. Alban's, and to the members of his family. Other versions of the story represent you as saying that you *had* baptised them. You will confer a favor on me, which I shall at any time be ready to reciprocate, if you will state whether these reports have been sanctioned, *in any way or to any extent*, by your authority. The official relation which I sustain to the party concerning whom they have been circulated, will be, I am sure, a sufficient apology for this request; and it is my hope that your answer will put it in my power to contradict them, with as little delay as possible.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN H. HOPKINS.

Rev. JEREMIAH O'CALLAGHAN.

To the above note I received, this morning, the following reply :—

BURLINGTON, VT., February 26, 1846.

Right Reverend Sir,

In your letter of yesterday handed me in the Post-Office you allude to some contradictory reports that have reached your ears in regard to the religious position of a Rev'd Gentleman in the neighborhood; and desire from me a statement of the case. Public reports, especially in Yankee land, if noticed by us, would ever keep us in trouble; and, as for me, I have long since resolved to let several of them go by unheeded. Therefore I expect that Your Lordship will on a more mature reflection allow that it is foreign to my clerical duty to take any part, but to observe profound silence concerning said reports, which silence I am confident will not be construed into any disrespect towards Your Paternity, whom I always hold in due veneration.

(Signed)

JER. O'CALLAGHAN.

Rt. Rev. JOHN H. HOPKINS, &c.

I need hardly say to you, my Rev. brother, that this letter was but poorly calculated to do away the reports concerning the declarations of the priest. Rather, indeed, was it adapted to strengthen if not to confirm them. It becomes necessary for me, consequently, to ask your own account of the matter, which would have been needless, if, as I had a right to expect, he had promptly disclaimed the assertions imputed to him. You will be pleased therefore to say, at your earliest convenience, whether any conversation or any fact whatever has taken place, which could give ground or color of truth to the language reported to

have been used by him concerning you. Your own frank statement will at once, I trust, enable me to set this most painful rumor at rest, without further trouble.

Your affectionate friend and brother in Christ,

(Signed) JOHN H. HOPKINS.

Rev. Wm. H. Hoit.

THE REV. W. H. HOIT TO THE BISHOP.

ST. ALBAN'S, February 28, 1846.

Right Reverend and Dear Sir,

Yours of the 28th has just this moment come to hand, and I give it an immediate reply. I had thought that my Rt. Rev. Bishop had known me too long and too well to suppose that I would do any thing of the kind referred to in his letter in a corner; and I had supposed that I knew him too well to find him taking note of idle and gossiping rumours and allowing them to move him from the ordinary tenor of his way. The reports referred to, so far as I or mine are concerned, or so far as I know aught about them, are entirely without foundation. Permit me to add, should any occasion ever arise for me to take any such step as that indicated in those reports, or any steps in an opposite direction, or in any direction incompatible with my present ecclesiastical relations, you may rest assured that I shall not fail promptly to communicate to yourself, or to the proper ecclesiastical authorities to which I may be then subject, such information as the case shall require.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Wm. HENRY HOIT.

Rt. Rev. Bishop HOPKINS.

THE BISHOP TO THE REV. W. H. HOIT.

BURLINGTON, VT., March 2, 1846.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your letters of the 26th and 28th ulto. are both received and are now before me. Of the last, in which you have made a satisfactory reply to the reports concerning your re-baptization by the Roman Catholic priest, I have nothing more to say, except to express my entire satisfaction. I wish I could extend the same remark to the other, in which you refuse to answer my questions on the ground that I have no official right to put them. This, in my mind, is very strange doctrine to be held by one who has twice come under a solemn vow to obey his Bishop, and addresses the chief minister of the Church by the title: "Reverend Father in God."

I must therefore remind you, (and with deep sorrow that it has become my duty,) that I am officially bound to oversee the conduct of the Church in the diocese, especially of the Clergy. That in this capacity I am bound to inquire into every evil report concerning them, whether it be in their moral or their religious capacity. That the 37th General Canon states this duty in the plainest terms as follows : §2. "If any Minister of this Church shall be accused, by public rumor, of discontinuing all exercise of the ministerial office without lawful cause, or of living in the habitual ~~disuse~~ of public worship or of the Holy Eucharist, according to the offices of this Church, or of being guilty of scandalous, disorderly or immoral conduct, or of violating the Canons, or preaching or inculcating heretical doctrine, it shall be the duty of the Bishop, or if there be no Bishop, the clerical members of the Standing Committee, to see that an inquiry be instituted as to the truth of such public rumor." This canon only declares what was always the duty of a Bishop, and do you suppose that I could be thus justified in appointing a committee to make inquiry, and yet be denied the power of asking the question in my proper person ? Or can you fail to see that the very strongest proof I could give you of consideration and kindness, was to write to you myself in the first place, instead of blazoning abroad, still more extensively, the reports concerning you, by the very fact that I had sent a committee to investigate them ?

But you seem to think that it was no offence to act as you have done in this matter. You admit that on the Lord's day, in my own Church, and myself officiating, you attended morning and evening, to the end of of the Evening Prayer ; and then, *before the sermon*, left your place, went across the street to the Roman Catholic Chapel, and there openly "conformed to the usage of those around you." You further add that your "motive was that of interest to see something practically of the services of the Roman Catholic Church, into whose history, character, claims, doctrines, usages, &c., you are at the present time making very diligent and earnest inquiry ;" and that "as you have ceased to be a parish priest, or to exercise the public functions of the Prot. Epis. Ministry for the present, and were only a passing sojourner in our village, and had attended both the morning and evening Offices of our Church, you did not think that you were doing wrong thus to avail yourself of the opportunity which you desired." Your own statement is thus amply sufficient to show that you have done what I consider an open injury to the Church, and to your own character as her minister. And I have no hesitation in saying that, four years ago, you would have judged as I do. For it was setting a "public bad example," which would be highly improper and worthy of rebuke if the same thing had been done by only a lay-communicant. It was "scandalous," because directly calculated to give rise to scandal ; "disorderly," because directly opposed to every rule of

order; "in violation of the Canons," because no man can suppose the 41st Canon, On the due celebration of Sundays, meant that the members of our Church, much less her ministers, should break away from the preaching of their own clergy, in order to wind up the public worship of that holy day by uniting with a Roman Catholic congregation. In fine, it was doing that which, if the Bishops of our Church could ever tolerate it, would effectually destroy her character and influence, and justify all that her worst enemies have said against her.

With respect to your apology for this violation of public order, I am grieved to say that it does not, in my mind, help the matter. For you ought to have learned enough of the doctrines, history and worship of Rome before you were ordained, to hold them in utter condemnation, and need not be going over the ground now, unless you are unhappily of the number of those who have been taught, by Mr. Newman's school, to look at that church, with all her awful corruptions, as an object of desire and yearning affection. And as to your allegation that "you have ceased to exercise the public functions of the ministry at present," this is itself an offence under the 37th Canon, unless you have "a lawful cause." Certainly you have not consulted your Bishop in relation to that matter, and I am quite ignorant of any *lawful cause* which can exist to make it necessary.

Much more might be added, if my time allowed, but enough has been said to show you how you stand in relation to the best judgment which I have been able to form upon the subject. And I am sorry to say that as the case appears to me, it will be impossible to avoid an act of formal ecclesiastical censure, without a plain dereliction of my official duty. God knows, I would gladly escape, if I could, from such a sad necessity. My remembrances of the days of old, before the notions of those Oxford teachers came in to trouble us, my affection for your dear wife and her estimable family, and my regard for your own personal merits, all unite to render such an act of discipline a sore and heavy trial, not only because it will afflict myself, but also because it will be a day of mourning to many others. But if you persist in your present position, I see no remedy; and justice must be done, before Christ and the Church, without respect of persons.

To avoid this painful result, I beseech you for your own sake, for the sake of your ministerial vows, for the sake of all connected with you by kindred and affection, to place yourself in your true situation, to acknowledge your error, and to give me your written promise that you will not again be seen entering a Roman Catholic Chapel in time of public worship, unless you should be a sojourner in foreign countries, far from the services of your own church, where the privileges of a traveller may be used without scandal or suspicion. And along with this, let me have some satisfactory assurance concerning your late purchase of six copies

of the Ursuline Manual. For this manifestly gives ground for another rumor, that you are disseminating around you the doctrines of Romanism, and thus doing what you quietly can to disturb and alienate the hearts of others from our communion, by inculcating that false and perilous system.

The melancholy truth, my dear and Reverend brother, is this: that you have contrived to become the topic of extensive fear and alarm in this community. The Romanists, for some time past, have been proclaiming, it is said, your speedy adoption of their faith, and your best friends talk about your course with sorrowful forebodings. I may not, and I dare not suffer this state of things to continue much longer, on my own official responsibility before God and man. And as I ask nothing of you but that you shall act as you ought to act, with due regard to your own consistency, and honesty, and honour, according to your vows of fidelity to the doctrines, worship and discipline of the Church to whose priesthood you have been ordained, I trust that you will see the propriety and necessity of re-establishing your own credit as soon as possible.

But should it, indeed, be the fact,—which the Lord, of his infinite mercy, forbid!—that these rumors are well-founded, and that the eminently gifted but most unhappy Newman, whom you have so long and ardently admired, has influenced your mind to follow the same track of apostacy, let me conjure you, as you value the estimation of all honest men, not to give any color to the charge of hypocrisy and treason towards the Church, which has branded his name with indelible reproach. The moment when a priest in our communion supposes himself convinced that the Church of Rome has a right to his allegiance, should be the moment in which he resolves to resign his priesthood without delay. We can have no peace, no union with Rome. And just such a judgment as Benedict Arnold has received on the page of our revolutionary history, who, bearing a commission under the American Congress, plotted the delivery of his post into the hands of the enemy,—even such must that man expect who, bearing the commission of our Reformed Church, acts, under that disguise, in the service of Popery.

On the other hand, if you are merely engaged in examining anew the subject of your theological studies, with a true-hearted attachment to your own communion, and in order to defend it the more effectually from the wiles and sophistry of the adversary, I need hardly say that I have been occupied in such pursuits for more than twenty years, and shall esteem it a privilege to be of any service to you. I do not think that there is a single question belonging to the claims of Rome which I have not examined, with the best lights from the fathers and the councils, nor am I afraid to compare my labours in that line with those of the majority of writers who have handled the Roman controversy. And if my researches can aid you in a right course, I shall think it a pleasure to con-

fer with you, by letter or otherwise, as you may have occasion to clear a doubt, or verify a fact or a principle.

It would seem, from an expression in your last letter, as if I ought to know you so well that I cannot be unacquainted with your present views of action. But this you must be aware, upon reflection, is quite otherwise. For several years I have had scarcely any other intercourse with you than that which belonged to the formal track of official custom. You are familiar with the fact, that ever since I felt it to be my duty to speak my mind about the ordination of the deceased Arthur Carey, you have lost all your previous sympathy with your bishop, and have used your influence, not without success, against my views of the doctrine of the Church, although those views differed in nothing from what I had published, with general approbation, long before. Nor can you be ignorant of what every observer knows, both in and out of the diocese, that the major part of our clergy preferred the guidance of Dr. Seabury to mine, and were not slow to manifest their choice, on every available occasion. On my own account this gave me but little concern, though, for their sakes and the sake of the diocese, I certainly regretted it sincerely. But I have had too long an experience with men and ministers to be at all surprised, and have regarded the parties concerned, and yourself especially, with no other feelings than those of the kindest allowance.

Still the inevitable result has been a certain personal estrangement. You ceased to confide in me, and therefore I ceased to have the means of knowing your opinions or your precise position. But during these last few years, we have all seen, to my sorrow, the change which has occurred in the leading writers of the Oxford Tracts and the British Critic. And it is impossible for me to tell, except from your own voluntary communications, how far you may have been tempted to keep them company. While it is true, therefore, that I did know you once,—and those were happy days for the Church, far beyond, I fear, what we are likely to see for a long while to come,—I cannot say that I know you now, beyond the formal exterior of official intercourse. The fault is not with me, for I hold nothing different from what I have always maintained, and it cannot be reasonably expected that I shall go to school again, and learn a new theology from gentlemen of whom I am old enough to be the father. But I shall be truly rejoiced when I can know you again as a constant and faithful minister of Him whose vows are on your soul. And earnestly and daily shall I solicit the throne of divine grace, for this happy consummation.

Your affectionate and sincere friend and brother in Christ,

(Signed)

JOHN H. HOPKINS.

Rev. Wm. H. Horr.

REV. W. H. HOIT TO THE BISHOP.

ST. ALBAN'S, March 4th, 1846.

Right Reverend and Dear Sir,

I this morning received your long communication of the 2d instant ; and had not the tenor of your previous letters,—coupled with the intelligence from Burlington that the correspondence which you have been pleased, so unexpectedly to myself, to carry on with me, has there been made matter of public and general notoriety and remark,—had not this in part prepared me for it, I should certainly have been much surprised by the nature of its contents. As it is, I have given it respectful and thoughtful attention, and this, my dear Sir, must be my prompt and firm reply. If you are really serious in thinking that the (what I cannot for a moment look upon as other than insignificant and trifling) matter which has given rise to all this letter-writing between us, or anything else in my past course, is sufficient to ground a formal and grave ecclesiastical inquiry, presentment and trial upon, then lose no time in taking the proper steps thereto : I have not the slightest wish to shun such a measure. The provisions of the Canon to which you refer me were all well known by me. I do not conceive myself to have offended aught against them. I feel firm in the consciousness in this respect of an open, manly, honest, and Christian integrity. And should the matter be formally brought to the notice of my brother Presbyters, I feel sure that their good sense and candor and justice will not fail at once to acquit me of all blame.

As it seems to be your desire, nay, your intention, to have the case made one of formal ecclesiastical investigation and trial, I shall, of course, make no reply now to what you bring forward in your communication before me. I would simply remind you, however, that when you so singularly refer me to Canon 37, §2, respecting the exercise of the ministerial office, you seem forgetful that my resignation of the parish rectorship here and its assumption by the Rev. Mr. Perry, was with your full knowledge and entire acquiescence, as was also my then declared intention of busying myself to a greater or less extent in the establishment of a parish school here. That school was put immediately in operation, and has daily received my attendance since then for the purposes of oversight and the giving of instruction. Your intimation of it is the first that I have had, that my course in this respect could even by implication be imagined to come in the remotest way within the provisions of that Canon. And I must be allowed to add, my dear Sir, with all due respect for your sacred office and for the Episcopal relation which you sustain to me, that your taking hold of this as a supposed ground of

accusation against me, as well as some other and similar points which you attempt to raise, do anything but argue on your part that readiness to save me and mine from trouble, pain and reproach, which you otherwise profess.

I feel justly and strongly moved by the course which (I cannot but think, mistakenly,) you have pursued in this matter, and by the language you have employed towards me. Unworthy insinuations, unjust suspicions, imputations of base and unmanly intentions and conduct, are more or less expressed or implied in much that you have both written and done. I cannot think you meant it. I feel sure you did not fully take in the force of what you were saying and doing. No, my dear sir, during the course of years in which I have been a presbyter in your diocese, I have never given you occasion to say that my ruling principles of action have not been those of an open, honest, just and honorable Christian manhood. And if ever during my course I have at any one time more than at another, as I conceive, strictly and most conscientiously governed myself by such just and honorable and manly principles, it is within the last few months,—it is so at this very moment. And such, I intend, shall ever be my conduct. Whatever course I may pursue, and whatever results I may arrive at therein, those principles shall ever be maintained by me, and by these shall my conduct be characterized. I am now, as I have been, a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in which it has pleased God by His providence to place me. And I intend to remain such, so long as I justly and conscientiously believe it to be His will that I should do so; and while so, shall aim, as I have ever done, to conform strictly to the “doctrines, discipline, and worship” of that Church. Should it please Him, however, to make it plainly my duty to leave that Church and go elsewhere, then by His grace I trust that I shall be enabled—great and painful as must needs be the sacrifice,—to act promptly and obediently to His will. And in any event, in any course, I trust, God helping me, to act in a manner not unworthy of myself, my good name, or of my family. Sure I am, from the present feelings which rule in my bosom, that I need (now, at least,) no promptings from without to move me to a jealous maintenance of such a principle of conduct.

Repeating then, Rt. Rev. and dear sir, the assurance given of my entire readiness and willingness to meet any and every proper and canonical investigation to which you may think best as my diocesan to subject my conduct; while at the same time I would respectfully suggest to you, as I did before, whether your own duty, the good of your diocese, the interest of religion, and just regard for all concerned will not be best subserved by your letting the whole matter rest where it is; and in any event praying very sincerely and earnestly that the good Spirit of

God may altogether rule the hearts and the conduct of those of us concerned therein.

I remain, yours very truly,

(Signed)

W. HENRY HOIT.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop HOPKINS,

Burlington, Vt.

P. S.—I subjoin the request, that, as a matter of just right to myself, I be duly and early informed of any formal steps which you decide to take in the case, should you, indeed, decide to take any such at all.

THE BISHOP TO THE REV. W. H. HOIT.

BURLINGTON, VT., March 11, 1846.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 4th instant is received, and I am both grieved and disappointed to find that my last communication has had no other result than to call forth another display of what I cannot but consider plain and manifest contumacy. You treat my opinion of your conduct as unworthy of any respect, take no notice whatever of my desire of satisfaction upon your purchase of *six* copies of the Romish system drawn up for the young, called the Ursuline Manual, cast yourself with entire confidence on the judgment of your fellow-presbyters in your favor, and, for at least the second time, advise me to let the matter drop, in consideration of my duty and the peace of the Church, even expressing your doubts whether I mean what I say, or can be serious in the course which I have marked out in relation to the matter. All this you have done with considerable smoothness of expression, and with a sufficient sprinkling of verbal regard for my office, but the substance is precisely the same, and presents, in my opinion, one of the most distinct instances of contempt towards your bishop which I could even have conceived, notwithstanding the low ebb to which episcopal authority has fallen in these unhappy days, as well in our mother-Church of England as in our own.

My present object, however, is mainly to explain to you some errors in your last letter, which a friendly consideration for your position renders it proper you should understand, before final action. The first relates to your confounding the *resignation of your parish* with *ceasing to exercise your ministerial office*: matters which you ought to be aware are perfectly distinct. To the first I consented, though not without reluctance, as the tenor of my answer will show. To the second I never consented, nor was such an idea ever proposed to me. On the contrary, your letter of the 2d December last, which is now before me, states your design in these words: "I purpose with your permission,

to propose to the parish to employ Mr. Perry as the rector, and pay to him the salary, and *retain me only as an assistant*, without remuneration. I trust the proposal will meet your approbation, or at least receive your free assent." To *that* proposal I did assent, since you expressly stated that besides your intended parochial school you were to be *retained* as the *assistant minister* of the new rector. Plainly, therefore, you were expected to continue "in the exercise of the ministry," and if you have since taken it upon you to cease that exercise, you cannot correctly say that it has been with my consent. Indeed the first intimation I had of such a purpose was from your letter of the 20th ulto. It was only the very Sunday before that day that I asked you, in my own Church at Burlington, to preach for me in the afternoon; and when you declined this request, I then desired that you would assist me in the services, if agreeable, which you also declined. Utterly ignorant was I that you had "ceased the exercise of your ministry," as your subsequent letter informed me; and still less did I imagine that you intended to show your disregard for your bishop and the Church, by leaving your seat before the commencement of my sermon, and going over the way to be a worshipper and "attentive and respectful listener" in the Roman Catholic Chapel.

Your second error lies in supposing that your conduct is to be a subject only for the judgment of your brother presbyters. The provisions of our Canon are for cases of "Trial," that is, where the *facts* are disputed between parties, the one asserting what the other denies. In such cases the presbyters act as assessors with the bishop, in the manner of a jury in courts of secular law, and the bishop presides as Judge, just as in the same courts is the practice on trials for crimes and misdemeanors. But in your case there can be no "trial," for the facts are neither disputed nor disputable, the proofs being all in your own handwriting addressed to myself. And therefore there is nothing for a jury to determine, or for your brother presbyters to try. Whether your conduct amounts to an offence for which you are liable to censure from your bishop, is not a question of *fact*, but a question of *law*, which belongs to the *judge alone* to decide. Besides this, however, your case involves the further principle of *contempt*, which any good lawyer can explain to you. He will tell you that *contempts* are not determined according to any written law or statute, but according to the settled practice of all courts, resting on the basis of immemorial usage. In cases of this character, the judge protects the rights and authority of his office according to his own sound discretion, being liable himself, however, to impeachment and removal, in case of oppression or excess. Low and degraded, indeed, would be the character of a Judge in the Church of God, if he had not an equal power to correct, or at least to

censure, contempts against his sacred jurisdiction. I ask no canon to authorize the exercise of such a function. I derive it from the very nature of the episcopal office and from the requirements of obedience in the ordination vow; and I am prepared to defend it by an appeal to all ecclesiastical principle and practice, and by the plain analogy with the rights of all secular judges; holding myself liable, of course, to impeachment and condemnation in my turn, if I abuse it by injustice, or improper severity.

I have next to observe, that you are strangely mistaken in supposing that I have entered into this matter with the boyish and unchristian levity which you seem, in many parts of your letters, to impute to me. I have acted, and trust that I shall act to the end, under the full consciousness that the eyes of Christ are upon me, and that his Church has a right to know, through all her borders, the doings of her bishops. And although you even appear to doubt, in your last letter, whether I am aware of the meaning of the language I have employed, I think you will find few discerning minds to agree with you. I have written and published too much, and lived too long, one would suppose, for such offensive remarks, even if our comparative works and ages were alone considered. But these and similar expressions only serve to show, too plainly, the practical construction which you attach to the office of a bishop; and aid in throwing light upon the sense in which you hold yourself bound by your ordination-vow.

In connexion with this, I must confess my surprise and regret that you have charged me, in your last letter, with having "expressed or implied, in much that I have both done and written, unworthy insinuations, unjust suspicions, and imputations of base and unmanly intentions and conduct," with respect to you. My dear brother, you are under a strange mistake in all this. I have insinuated nothing, but spoken plainly and distinctly. And a very slight reflection on the circumstances will show you what I meant, and still mean, with regard to the whole of this painful matter.

I need hardly tell you that ever since the rise of the Oxford Tractarian party, you have expressed yourself distinctly on their side. Every man that knows you is aware of this fact, and your name, far and wide, has been associated for years with what is popularly called *Puseyism*. But this alone gave me no concern, so long as I could believe that you stood firm and constant against the Church of Rome. The Tractarian party in England split asunder, as is notorious, some four years ago, when Mr. Newman's "developments" towards Popery became so apparent, that the honest-hearted sons of the Church of England could endure them no longer. Rev. Mr. Palmer, Rev. Dr. Hook, and other distinguished men, came out, strongly and distinctly, against Romanism, while Mr. Newman published his "retraction" of all that he had pre-

viously said and published concerning its abominations. Now I did not ask you to define your position with respect to these new distinctions between those great leaders, but I contented myself with the idea, (for "charity hopeth all things,") that you were, or soon would be, satisfied with the line drawn by Palmer and Hook; and perhaps, eventually, when you had examined the subject more thoroughly, would even believe, as I certainly do, that *they* had gone farther than was either strictly consistent or defensible.

In due time, however, Mr. Newman openly apostatizes, and about forty of his clerical adherents follow his example. And then comes forth the astounding acknowledgment that he had formed the intention four years before! So that this gifted man contrived to satisfy his conscience with wearing the livery and bearing the priestly office of our mother-Church, while he was in heart, in secret purpose, and in active effort, the servant of her fearful adversary, *for four years together*. The same dishonest, hypocritical, and most Jesuitical policy has been practised to some extent by others of his party, and there is every reason to believe that the list is not yet filled up, of this most awful kind of treason.

Now with these deplorable exhibitions spread before our eyes, and with new facts borne on the wings of every mail, proving that the mischief is still at work in England, and that there are even men among ourselves disposed to treat those cases of apostacy with tender allowance, I am startled with the report that you, perhaps the most prominent and influential presbyter in the diocese, had left my own church, before the services were over, publicly on the Lord's day, and gone to unite as a visible worshipper in the Roman Catholic chapel, where you know that there is always practised, as a regular part of their liturgy, the invocation of the Virgin and the Saints, and where no clergyman could venture to be seen, without at once filling the minds of our Church with alarm and consternation.

Unwilling to believe that there could be any truth in the more serious part of such a rumor, I write to you forthwith, in the hope that your answer would enable me to explain it satisfactorily, and that answer, substantially, admits that the report was but too true. Still, desirous to be able to reduce your error to the lightest shade consistent with the circumstances, I write again, asking for more minute details concerning your conduct in that chapel. And at this point, you refuse to give me any satisfaction, you deny my official right to put such questions, and, (as if you were not an Episcopalian at all,) you turn the government of your bishop into a plain intimation of his "caprice" and wilfulness.

Passing over the report of what the priest had said about your baptism, (which, being fairly answered, is not now in question,) I proceed

to my next letter, in which I give you my opinion of your case as it then stood, and offer to your adoption a plain and moderate pledge, in order to avoid the painful necessity of an act of formal censure. And in that letter, I advert distinctly to the alarm and uneasiness which your course had excited throughout our community, and speak plainly and openly of the suspicion which that course was calculated to raise, concerning your becoming one of the Newman party. I tell you frankly, that I do not know where you stand, but earnestly desire, for your own sake as well as that of the Church, that you should declare it openly. I treat your position hypothetically, and expressly state that if you are, as I fervently hoped, still faithful in your allegiance to the Church, and are only going over the Romish controversy with the consistent wish to be an abler defender of the true faith, I should be happy to render you all the aid which the zealous study of twenty years enabled me to offer. Certainly in all this, I have endeavoured to act as your friend, as well as bishop. If I were anxious to condemn you, I had already sufficient, and more than sufficient, on which to ground my censure. You can hardly think, from any thing in my past life, that I am likely to shrink from responsibility; and therefore you had no reason to doubt whether the spirit which dictated that letter was any other than the spirit of kind consideration.

In reply to this, as I supposed, frank and friendly communication, you set me at defiance, offer me no acknowledgment, make no explanation whatever of your position or your principles, take no notice of my question concerning the Ursuline Manual, but charge me with making "unworthy insinuations," and casting "imputations of base and unmanly intentions," &c. Whereas the whole object of my writing was to induce you to *state your own case*, and *define your own position*, (as other men, Rev. Messrs. Hook, Palmer, &c., had done before you,) for the sake, not of my character, but of your own. And I am now, therefore, with deep sorrow, compelled to say to you, that your last letter gives me strong suspicions concerning your *faith in the doctrines of the Reformation*. I cannot avoid seeing that you do not set down one word against the course of Mr. Newman, or against the corruptions of Rome. I cannot help perceiving that you write precisely as you might be expected to do, if you were already near to the point of resolving upon your secession, but were determined, like those sad examples on the other side of the Atlantic, to take your own time for it: whether, like them, for the purpose of having as many associates as possible, or for any other peculiar reason, it is not for me to say.

In consequence of this unhappy issue of our correspondence, I consider it my solemn duty to insist upon my official authority to inquire into other points, essential to the due discharge of your existing relations, as a commissioned presbyter of the Church under my jurisdic-

tion. And as you have already denied my right to ask questions, and have thus advanced a notion which would, if successful, cut the very nerves of all episcopal government, I must first invite your attention to that part of my office, which it is sufficiently evident you do not understand.

And here I shall not occupy my time by proving that this right has always been exercised from the beginning, whenever suspicion arose, from evil report or otherwise, that a clergyman was unsound, either in faith or practice. I cannot suppose you to be ignorant of a fact which lies on the face of all ecclesiastical history and law, and which has even extended its influence into all the courts of Equity. But I shall come at once to the point that the bishop is the constituted *Visitor* of the Church within his diocese, and that, as such, it is his right to inquire into everything which involves the conduct of his clergy and the state of their congregations. This right is recognized by the 25th and 26th General Canons, to say nothing of its peculiar exercise under the 37th General Canon, to which I have previously adverted. My main object, however, is to direct your attention to the action of the bishops, when proceeding, *as visitors*, to investigate the condition of the General Theological Seminary, in 1844, and to remind you that they exercised their office in this very mode: viz. by *sending written interrogatories to all the professors*, which each professor answered without delay. And this they did after the professors had demurred to answering a committee appointed by the Board of Trustees, on the express ground that since the right of *visitation* belonged to the bishops, jointly and severally, *as such*, they were bound to answer them, and them alone. I presume you will hardly imagine that the power of a bishop to address written questions to the professors of the Seminary, is greater than the power of the same bishop to address similar questions to any of his own diocesan clergy. And to put this matter in its least doubtful form, I will content myself with a few of the same kind of inquiries which the professors answered on that occasion, requesting you to return me a plain reply.

1. What do you teach, publicly or privately, concerning the Church of Rome, as being in error in matters of faith?

2. What concerning the correctness of the principles laid down in the Oxford Tract, No. 90?

3. What concerning the consistency of a clergyman's receiving, at the same time, the doctrines of this Church, and the doctrinal decrees of the council of Trent, the damnatory clauses excepted?

4. Have you publicly or privately taught that the English Reformation of the 16th century was a useless or unjustifiable proceeding?

5. Have you duly exposed, publicly and privately, as occasion might

allow, the doctrinal and other errors of the Church of Rome, to those who were or are under your instruction ?

6. Are any superstitious practices of the Church of Rome, such as the use or worship of the crucifix, of images of saints, or the invocation of the blessed Virgin and other Saints, publicly or privately recommended by you ?

7. What have you publicly or privately taught concerning the heretical character of the Church of Rome ?

8. Have the Ursuline Manual, Mr. Newman's late work on Development, the little book called "Geraldine," or any other work containing a defence and inculcation of the doctrines of the Church of Rome, been either publicly or privately recommended or circulated by you ?

In placing the foregoing interrogatories before you, my dear brother, I am only pursuing a very painful, but, in my judgment, a most necessary duty, and one without the faithful discharge of which, no bishop, in days like these, can fulfil that part of his office which requires him to keep the Church pure from all "erroneous and strange doctrines." If the English bishops have not thought fit to use their functions in this respect, that is a matter for them and not for me to excuse. If an instance of precisely the same episcopal inquiry has not occurred in our own Church, I presume it must be because yours is the first case in which there has been any such occasion for it: for notwithstanding an abundance of Romish tendencies in certain quarters, I have heard of no example save yours, when a presbyter has actually left his own Church, on the Lord's day, to worship along with a Roman Catholic congregation; and still less have I heard of any presbyter denying the right of his bishop to inquire of him an account of his actions or his doctrines, after he had become a subject of evil report. And it is chiefly for this very reason, —because it is the first case of its kind,—that I have taken the more pains to explain the whole length and breadth of the matter, while an honorable and consistent accommodation of it is still in your own power. I am seeking for nothing but a distinct avowal of your true position, which every right-minded man must be supposed ready and willing to make at all times, but especially in times of trouble and suspicion. Let me know frankly where you stand, and the object of my inquiries will be accomplished. Rejoiced and happy shall I be, if I find myself able to vindicate you, and set at rest my own and many other hearts, which are now occupied, on your account, with no small grief and anxiety.

I cannot tell why you have so frequently, in your letters, expressed your doubts whether I am in earnest in my course, or suggested the propriety of my retreating from it, as if I were in the habit of trifling with points of serious discipline, or had not carefully surveyed my ground before I began. I know, indeed, full well, that the loss of all my proper-

ty in the ruin of my Seminary, six years ago, gave you the opportunity of purchasing at sheriff's sale, along with another friend, my library and some other things, for a sum far below one-third of their value, and that you have kindly left them in my possession to this day. I know, also, that you are one of the landlords of the little farm on which I live, and have claims for arrears of rent which have not been paid, although I trust they soon will be. But I cannot suppose you have so low an opinion of your bishop, as to think that he would suffer his personal obligations to weaken his sense of official duty to the Church of God. I know, too, that you are rich, and young, and closely connected with many individuals of wealth and influence. Whilst I am poor, and growing old, and stand alone in this community, with none around me to make my cause their own, save on the single ground of conscience and of principle. But neither can I imagine that you looked at this aspect of the matter, when you wrote the language to which I refer. The less I have in this world, and the nearer my approach to the tribunal of Christ, the more am I warned that I should look well to my spiritual stewardship, and take care that I neither do, nor leave undone, any of its solemn duties "by partiality." The judges appointed in the Church of the great Redeemer may not presume to be "respecters of persons"; neither may they take even "a gift," (much less a loan,) "to blind their eyes withal." Nor may they suffer the discipline of the Apostles to incur the reproach which Anacharsis the Scythian pronounced against the laws of Solon, when he compared them to spiders' webs, which indeed entangled the little flies, while the large ones were always strong enough to break through.

I entreat you to believe, therefore, that whatever pains I have taken to explain the whole of this afflicting subject, have not arisen from any desire to make a difference on account of your temporal advantages, nor yet from any faltering of my resolution, through my personal regard for yourself, or my affection for your connexions. I think I should have taken equal pains, had the same facts occurred in relation to the humblest presbyter of my diocese, because I should feel myself deficient in fairness and in justice, if I had failed to do all in my power to instruct the erring individual in the whole range of the matter, before a final sentence was declared, from which, (as our system now stands) there can be no appeal. In no other way could I judge as I would be judged, or do unto others as I would they should do unto me. In no other way could I perform the duty incumbent on every bishop, of striving to admonish and reclaim, before a formal decree of censure.

And now, once more, I commend you to the guidance and direction of Almighty God, fervently beseeching Him that the Spirit of holiness and truth may incline your intellect and your heart to such a course, as

shall best secure your own eternal happiness, the peace and order of his Church, and the advancement of his glory.

Your faithful friend and brother in Christ,

(Signed)

JOHN H. HOPKINS.

Rev. WM. H. HOIT.

THE REV. W. H. HOIT TO THE BISHOP.

ST. ALBAN'S, March 17, 1846.

Right Reverend and Dear Sir,

To your communication received by me on Friday last, and which I should have earlier noticed had not indispensable family and other cares prevented me, I hardly know what reply to make; so much am I surprised by its very extraordinary and unexpected contents. And believe me, my dear sir, I do not say this to offend you, or to express the slightest measure of disesteem towards your official character. I am very sincere when I say the tenor of your letter has filled me with unmingled surprise and astonishment. The positions assumed in it, the principles laid down, and the reasonings employed to maintain them, are such as I never could have supposed to proceed from you, or from any one circumstanced like yourself and who had duly weighed what he was advancing. But I will endeavor, God helping me, to give to it a not unfitting reply; and I pray Him so to guide me as that I may neither think nor write anything which I ought not.

In my last letter to you, thinking that you were going to make the matter one of formal investigation and trial, I did not undertake to reply to what you had objected against me,—saving to that of my ceasing to exercise the ministry, which I noticed because it seemed to arise wholly from a misapprehension of the matter, or else from forgetfulness on your part. And I gave, as the reason for my not replying, that my replies of course would come more suitably when the matter was taken up for formal examination. I find, however, that in your last, notwithstanding my reason thus given for my course, you object to my silence in this respect; and, among other things, especially concerning the circumstance of my having some time since purchased at Burlington several copies of the Ursuline Manual. Permit me then to reply to that point now. The transaction was purely a private one, unconnected with either my personal or official character, and should have been presumed to be right, until fairly shown to be wrong. Since the use and motive were unknown, it was equally within the judgment of charity to suppose them to be proper, as to fancy them sinister and bad. I have now to inform you that the books purchased were not designed for the use of the members of our Church, and that the whole transaction was at once and satis-

factorily explained by me to the Rev. Mr. Perry, as the Rector here, so soon as you brought it to my notice as susceptible of an unfavorable construction. This matter, I trust, is satisfactorily set at rest.

The next point raised against me, to which I now answer, is that of my exercise of the ministry, which you still seem to suppose I had entirely ceased. Permit me then to inform you, that so far from having ceased to officiate, I had on every Sunday been present with Rev. Mr. Perry in his chancel and assisted him in the public services, from the time of my resignation of the rectorship of the Parish up to that of the opening of the present correspondence between us, and but for that should now have been daily aiding him in the Lent services. For the reason, however, of my ministerial character being thus brought in question, I told Mr. Perry that it would be most proper that I should cease from public ministrations until the matter was determined concerning me, and I have accordingly done so. What I intended to say in relation to the matter of my public ministry, in my first letter to you, was, that in being in Burlington, as I was, on the day referred to, I was not absenting myself from any public ministerial duties of my own. I had for the time no parish of my own, was not engaged to minister for any congregation, was disappointing none by being away from it to be present elsewhere. This further explanation, I trust, will also set this matter at rest.

The only remaining charge, preferred as such, in your previous letter, is that of my having gone into the Roman Catholic Chapel at Burlington, and witnessed the performance of their Evening Service. Upon this I desire to make a remark or two, not for the purpose of extenuating the wrong, if wrong I did in the matter, but that it may be distinctly and clearly understood what was done—that there may be no just ground left for misapprehension of it. Permit me, then, first of all, to correct you in saying as you do that I “went there to be a worshipper.” This was not at all the case. In my first reply to you I stated distinctly that I went merely as an observer, and while there was only a respectful and attentive listener; that I took no part in the offices, and only conformed to the attitudes and movements of the congregation in that formal way which a decent regard to their feelings required. We do not ourselves object to strangers coming into our churches and attending our services as observers and listeners, and without being intentionally worshippers with us; but we do object to their doing so, if they will not so far conform outwardly to the conduct of the congregation as to avoid giving offence by an unseemly singularity. So far and so far only was my “conformity to the usages of those around me.” Such was that which was done. And now for the nature and character of the act. This you characterize as “scandalous,”

“disorderly,” and “in violation of the canons.” It seems to me that very much in this respect depends upon the motives and intentions of the person acting. He may misjudge, and so err undesignedly; in which case he can hardly be said to act scandalously and disorderly. And if my own conduct in the present case is to be judged of by this reasonable and fair rule, it must be allowed to escape all such imputation. For nothing was farther from my mind than any thought or design to offend yourself or any other person, or to do aught that was contrary to the laws of the Church or in violation of my duty. And that such you would readily understand to be the case with me, whatever you might think of the propriety of the act itself, I supposed you would at once gather both from your own personal knowledge of me, and from the tenor of my reply to your first communication. I know very well that, from such motives as those I have mentioned as my own in the present case, or from others like them, persons in our Church, and among them bishops and other clergymen, were not unfrequently accustomed to go into the religious assemblies of any and all the religious denominations around us, and though informally censured by some for so doing, yet no one had ever really thought of bringing them forward as grave offenders for doing so, or deemed them really obnoxious to the provisions of any canon against them. You have in Burlington new and popular clergymen in both the so-called Orthodox and Unitarian societies, neither of whom have I ever heard preach. They have high reputation in the community, and from curiosity or other interest, I might have been desirous to improve the chance opportunity afforded me to go and hear one of them. And I dare say if I had done so in the present instance, instead of going from similar motives where I did, I should have heard nothing of the step’s being “scandalous,” “disorderly,” &c. And yet our Church makes no distinction between the Roman Catholic and other religious communities around her; or if she does, it is in favor of the former, as having the Apostolic succession and Ministry, and as being an integral Church, while the others have no such ministry, and at best are only individually members of Christ’s Church by virtue of their baptism, and not at all so in any corporate capacity which they have. But not to dwell longer upon this charge against me: such was the act, such its motives, such its character. And if it shall seem such to the Standing Committee (who are in the capacity of a grand-jury, as it were, in the matter of all offences and misdemeanors against our laws,) as to subject me to the charge of having broken any canon or law of our Church, and they therefore present me to you for trial upon the issue so made up; as I said before, I am entirely ready and desirous to join the issue, and if found guilty by my peers, to submit myself unresistingly and uncomplainingly to the sentence which you as my ecclesiastical judge may please to pronounce against me.

Thus much for the former charges against me. And now for the new (and to me most unexpected) ones, which you bring forward in your last letter; these, namely of "contumacy," and "contempt." The former, I suppose, you ground upon my declining to answer the inquiries put to me in your second letter; and the other upon—I hardly know what, for you do not say, unless it be upon a supposed intention on my part to be disrespectful towards your office and its proper dignity in my communications to you. I can only say that I intended not any the slightest measure of disrespect, and now promptly disclaim anything I have written which shall be made to appear fairly open to such construction. And I also disclaim all thought or intention of contumaciousness,—I am not conscious of having for a moment cherished anything of its spirit, or having designedly laid myself open to its charge. Nor do I think that I have, or that I have rendered myself justly liable to the charge of "contempt." Before proceeding to remark further upon these charges, however, I have a word or two to say with regard to the general subject of Episcopal authority, and also to the proper distinction which must needs be made between the personal acts and character of the individual, and those of the same in his official capacity. With regard to the first of these, Episcopal Authority, it is obvious to remark that, as understood and practically held, in our Church at least, it is specific in kind and limited in extent. The Bishop has authority over his Presbyters, but then not *all* authority, but that only of a magistrate or public officer; an authority having specific reference to the subject matters which the office is designed to embrace, and to them only; and which even in these is to be guided and restrained by the laws prescribed for it, and is not to take for its measure the mere personal will of the individual man who chances to be placed in office. As a Presbyter of the Church, then, when receiving Holy Orders, and making my ordination vow, I promised obedience, indeed, to my Bishop, but as Bishop in the exercise of the proper functions of his office; and even in this not as exercising those functions and powers at his own will, but "according to the Canons of the Church." And, in passing, I humbly submit it to yourself whether, during the course of years in which I have been a presbyter of your diocese and a Rector of one of its Parishes, I have not been a faithful and obedient one, according to the tenor of my promise. But to return to the matter in hand. I am accused by you as being guilty of the charges of "contumacy" and "contempt." Am I so? Contumacy is a "wilful and obstinate disobedience to any lawful summons or judicial order." It is a technical term used to express the offence of non-appearance in court of a person summoned judicially. In our general canons it is used in the instance of an accused Bishop neglecting or refusing to appear according to the summons of the ecclesiastical Court; and in our own diocesan canons it is used to express the like offence in

the instance of the neglect or refusal of an accused clergyman to appear and answer, when presented for trial, and summoned to appear, &c. Now have I been so presented and summoned, and have neglected or refused to appear and answer? How, then, can I be said to be guilty of "contumacy"? Again, I am accused of "contempt," that is to say, of the offence technically called "contempt." This is a term used to express certain offences committed against a court of justice, in impeding it in the process of fulfilling its duties. If the processes which it shall issue in the execution of its proper functions be resisted, or it be itself openly and flagrantly disturbed in its proceedings, or any high-handed measures be employed to defeat its proper ends, these are characterized as "contempts," and render the offender liable to prompt and summary punishment. But can any thing in the present case be possibly brought into this category? Has any judicial process been issued against me? Has any issue been made up, and Court formed, and trial begun, whereby I could by any possibility be guilty of "contempt of court"? Certainly not. Though you bring these charges against me, then, in the technical sense of the terms expressing them, and refer me to lawyers for an explanation of their meaning; it is plain that no occasion has arisen as yet on which I *could* be guilty of them, and therefore I must take the terms employed by you in another and lower signification. By *contumacy*, then, I suppose you mean my declining to answer the inquiries made in your second letter; and by *contempt*, either my calling in question the rightfulness of your authority to question me as you have in the matter, or else my complaint of the wrong towards me involved in what you have done and written. The one becomes a question of disobedience to my bishop, the other a question of the propriety of my conduct towards him. Now as to the former, I had no intention of being disobedient; I declined answering you, simply and solely upon the ground that I conceived you trespassing beyond the rightful limits of your official authority over me, that it would be subjecting our clergy (if the principle were allowed) to such a supervision of their conduct as they had never been heretofore used to, such as I did not conceive our present canons to warrant, and such as the clergy would certainly object to on all sides, until the nature and extent of it were defined and settled by written laws, and not left to the mere will and caprice of individual Bishops. This last expression, permit me to remark in passing, you have incorrectly taken to be "a plain intimation of your own caprice and wilfulness." No such thought was present to my mind. I meant no more than that, without definite laws upon the subject, the will of the Bishop must of course be the sole measure of the exercise of such a wide and far-reaching power, and that this of course is liable to become capricious and unreasonable. My former view of this matter I retain still, and should give you substantially the same

answer again, under similar circumstances. Perhaps I am incorrect in my opinion, and have declined to obey when obedience was rightfully required. If so, it was an error of judgment and not of will: there was no wilful disobedience in the case, nothing of the nature of contumacy.

As to the other point, that of "contempt," no contempt towards either your official or personal conduct, no disrespect towards either, was intended. But you have taken offence at my language, because I spoke strongly and with the warmth of hurt and wounded feelings. And why should I not have done so? You sustain to me not only the relation of Bishop, but also that of man to man. And if as a man you intimate to me things unworthy of my character and standing as an honest and upright man, surely you will not shield yourself behind your official character from the plainness of a fitting and manly reply from me. Whether, however, you do so or not, whenever it may please either you or any other individual to intimate to me that I am a basely dishonest, traitorous, hypocritical, jesuitical man, I shall not fail to give expression to the honest and manly indignation which will be raised thereby in my mind. For I have a character as dear to me as yours or any man's can be to you or him, and I have a family (God be thanked that it is so dear and precious a one to me) to which my good name is no less a rightful and valued inheritance.

But I have now done with the several charges raised against me, and therefore pass to the consideration of the other matters contained in your letter. The first of these which presents itself to my notice, is that of the position taken by you that I am not to have my cause tried before my fellow Presbyters and be pronounced guilty by them, before sentence is given forth against me; but that it is competent for yourself alone to determine my case, to condemn me, and to inflict such censure upon me as you may deem fit. Sir, I can only express my utter amazement at the annunciation of such an unheard-of and most monstrous principle. For it is utterly repugnant to our whole ecclesiastical system, is alike at war with every principle of justice acted upon in our civil and social regulations, and is opposed, utterly opposed to that deep-seated and strong feeling existing in the bosom of our whole community, namely, that no man is to be condemned save upon a trial by a jury of his peers. Upon reading the part of your letter containing this matter, my mind immediately recalled the language of the learned and eloquent author of the work on the "Constitution and Canons" of our Church, and which is found on page 364 of that book. Himself for years a practised and eminent lawyer, and afterwards distinguished for a large practical acquaintance with our ecclesiastical system, this is his language in the work referred to. "Under our system of government," says he, "a bishop has no right, directly or indirectly, to try a clergyman: he is entitled to be tried by his brother-presbyters. * * * It will be a

sad day for the Church when the clergy, without the intervention of triers of their own order, may be tried and condemned by the bishop alone. The smallest approach to such an encroachment should be promptly resisted." And yet in the present instance you yourself propose to be the accuser, Judge, Jury, and Sheriff, all within yourself, and to proceed at once to a condemnation of me and the infliction of punishment. Any sentence of punishment which you may be pleased thus to award me, however, will be most plainly and manifestly void and worthless: it can do me no harm, but will only re-act to your own prejudice. Our own Canon law provides the mode by which alone clergymen can be proceeded against and condemned, and it will not, cannot recognize the validity of any sentence pronounced otherwise than it directs. But you say, "there can be no trial, for there is nothing for a jury to determine," "the facts are not disputable, &c. &c." The facts may not be, but the nature and value of them is, and whether they involve a breaking of the Canons,—whether or no I am guilty of the "scandalous," "disorderly" and bad conduct against which the Canon is directed,—This is the charge upon which you would have me arraigned, it is upon this that issue will be joined between me and my presenters, (if presented,) and upon this I have and do and shall plead *not guilty*. And before I can be condemned I must be duly presented, must be heard, must be tried by a jury of my fellow-presbyters, and receive a verdict of "guilty" from their lips. I had intended to say much more upon this point,—as I well might,—but neither time nor letter-room will permit me.

You next remark upon the expression in my last letter that I could not think you meant to do me the injustice and wrong expressed or implied in both your language and conduct towards me, and that you did not fully take in the force of what you were saying and doing. This you characterize as a very offensive strain of remark. I have simply to say in reply, that the case was this, namely: Here was a young presbyter of your diocese, whom you had known as such for some eight or nine years, and that too as one open, honest, and manly in his course, (for I trust I may rightfully say this of myself, under the circumstances, without charge of egotism,) not obnoxious to unworthy suspicions; and yet whom, upon the merest hearsay, the rumored tales of an excited and gossiping community, you were ready to suppose an hypocritical, dishonest, treacherous deceiver,—not that which he seemed to be, but under color of it not unwilling at least to do a concealed and traitorous work. I could not suppose you really meant all this, and therefore I deemed it more just to you to assume that you acted and wrote from the warmth of sudden impulse, rather than from deliberate and well-weighed intention. But as you now express your preference for the other construction, there I let it rest.

And now, passing by several subordinate remarks, to which I would like to reply had I time, or were it strictly called for, I come to the remaining and, indeed, main subject of your present communication: I mean that of my "position" in the Church, your call upon me to define it, and your propounding to me written questions, to which you request me "to return a plain reply." My answer to this portion of your letter must necessarily be brief, for I have already, though unavoidably, made my communication quite long. Permit me to remark, then, that while there are confessedly differing parties and differing classes of opinions in our Church, the Church itself formally recognizes no one of them, but practically tolerates all of them alike. She does not herself require her members or ministers to define their party position, nor can I think that she will countenance her bishops in making such a requisition. She requires them, i. e. all her members, both clergy and laity, simply to conform themselves to her "doctrines, discipline, and worship." In my last letter to you I distinctly stated my position to be that of one of her members, whose aim was and should be, so long as he remained in her communion, to yield that conformity. It has ever been my aim also, both publicly and privately, to set forth what I honestly conceive to be her true doctrines, and, as occasion demanded, to point out and reprove the errors opposed to those doctrines. I have neither publicly or privately taught or recommended any practices or usages condemned by her, nor have I attempted either by the circulation of books or in any other mode to do her an injury. And if any person or persons accuse me to you of having done so, I claim to know who they are, and to be confronted with them. As to the course taken by Mr. Newman and some of his friends, as also by other individuals at home and abroad, I said nothing in my former communication, for it did not for one moment enter my thoughts that it was expected of me that I should do so, or that there was any occasion for me to do so. Nor do I see any now. They are but individuals, who have acted in their individual capacity and on their own responsibility. I know not why I should volunteer any judgment upon their conduct, either of one kind or another.

In conclusion you remark that you do not see why I expressed a doubt of your proceeding against me as you proposed. Not one instant for the reason you have presumed to suggest; the thought never entered my mind that any pecuniary or other obligation under which you might suppose yourself placed towards me would for a moment withhold you from the performance of what you deemed your duty. And I regret that such a suspicion should have found place in your mind, and should have led you, as it has, to make personal remarks, as unjust towards me and the friend associated with me, as they are unworthy of yourself. No, my reason for expressing such a doubt was, that the charge against me upon which to found a grave ecclesiastical trial was too insignificant

for the purpose, and would be so viewed by yourself when you came to think seriously of moving in the business. Whether I judged rightly, and hence the changed and now most remarkable form which the case is made to take, I pretend not to say. You bring it up, apparently as indicating disrespect towards you, that I advise you to let the matter drop, &c. Such was not my language, nor its meaning. I respectfully, and with no other feeling than that of entire deference, suggested such a conclusion of the matter for your own consideration. I advised not, neither do I now.

In conclusion, I beg simply to reciprocate the very kindly expressed prayer which you offer for me in closing your letter, and to say that I do indeed most fervently beseech God to guide us all to do that which is right, and to restrain us from that which is wrong.

Yours very truly,
(Signed)

WM. HENRY HOIT.

Rt. Rev. Bishop HOPKINS.

THE BISHOP TO THE REV. W. H. HOIT.

BURLINGTON, Vt. March 21, 1846.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your communication of the 17th instant, reached me last night, and I lose no time in making a reply, which I trust will close my part of this painful correspondence.

It seems that my statement concerning the episcopal power to pronounce an official and formal censure upon you, without a previous presentment by the Standing Committee and a verdict by your fellow-presbyters, involves in your opinion, "unheard of and monstrous principles." Strong language certainly to be applied to the whole administration of Church government throughout the Christian world, anterior to the formation of our American system, some fifty-seven years ago! For you can hardly be ignorant that before that time, Standing Committees and assessors acting as jurors on the trial of a clergyman were perfectly unknown in the Church, and are emphatically novelties of our own manufacture. Whether they are improvements on the true system of Episcopal government derived from the beginning, I shall leave to be decided by those "Catholic" minds, who are usually distinguished for professing remarkable reverence for the primitive, the universal, and the truly apostolic system, unless when it happens not to suit them.

Nevertheless I have no intention whatever to violate the lawful rights of our modern rules and regulations, although I am no advocate for their assumed superiority. I endeavored to explain to you, on the principles of legal analogy, that they have their proper operation in all cases where

the *facts* are disputed, and that such is the meaning of the word *Trial*, that it refers to an issue of fact, and not to a construction of law. The facts belong to the Jury, the law belongs to the Judge, and therefore when the facts are admitted by the party, the office of the Jury is necessarily superseded, because they have nothing to try.

Pursuing the same legal analogy, your case may be likened to a *Demurrer*, because the fact alleged against you is confessed, but you deny that it is a just ground for episcopal censure, and your lawyer will tell you that all cases of this description are decided by the Court, without the intervention of a Jury.*

But I shall not consume my time by enlarging on this matter, because the practical question does not require it. Let it suffice then for me to say that it is not my design to impinge at all upon even your own ideas upon the subject, because the kind of censure which I think appropriate to your case is not that which the canons require for convictions by presentment and trial. I do not propose to pronounce any technical sentence of "admonition, suspension, or degradation from the ministry," with respect to you personally, through the judicial forms of a citation, a public hearing, and a recorded decree. The censure which I contemplate goes no further than what has been frequently administered by our own bishops, when they published their official rebuke and condemnation of error. And the mode of it will be that of a Pastoral Letter, which I design to accompany by our correspondence in full, so that you shall speak for yourself to the Church at large, as you have spoken to me.

In my judgment, however, this kind of censure is as much an official and episcopal act, as any other. Some men indeed call it an *opinion* only, and content themselves with saying that a bishop is as much at liberty to publish his opinions as a presbyter. But I call it an official censure, though of the mildest kind, such as I certainly should not think of publishing, if I did not fully consider it a matter of ecclesiastical duty, connected with my episcopal obligations to "banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word, and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to the same."

Although your last letter argues, at much length, against my ideas of your contumacy and contempt, yet you seem disposed to do away in some degree with this cause of complaint, as well by your giving answers to questions which you previously denied my official right to ask, as by your formal disclaimer of all that might fairly be deemed disrespectful. In reply to your argument it is only proper for me to observe that I used the terms in their ordinary rather than in their technical meaning. But the *principle* is precisely the same. I maintain, distinctly, that your ordination

* Bl. Com. 4. 334.

vow binds you alike at all times, whenever your bishop, acting officially, addresses you as such. My first letter contains a sufficient announcement of the fact, that I wrote "as your bishop and your friend," and your own second letter shows that you then recognized my official character, strangely enough assigning that as the very reason why you refused to give me any satisfaction. If this and similar passages do not involve contempt and contumacy towards your bishop, I have no hesitation in acknowledging that words have lost their meaning. You say, however, that you *intended* to be perfectly respectful, and I am certainly quite willing to believe it, although your mode of showing it at times is altogether beyond my comprehension. I am aware, indeed, that our Tractarian brethren at Oxford have made an ingenious discovery that the language of our Thirty-nine Articles may be subscribed in a *non-natural* sense, so as to make them quite consistent with Romanism; and I can readily perceive that a similar kind of logic might succeed as well in reconciling your letters with the tenor of your ordination vow. But I cannot for a moment admit the validity of the Tractarian hypothesis, which breaks down every established guard of doctrinal truth and moral obligation, by making the most solemn words mean anything or nothing, through the magic of secret intention. And I have no difficulty in saying that if ever those gentlemen, or yourself, should be placed in the office of a bishop, you will understand the "reverent obedience" which the ordinal imposes, according to its *natural* sense, with a conviction at least as strong as mine.

Your impressions on the subject of my charging you with base, unworthy and treasonable conduct, are not less unaccountable. And the righteous indignation which you think my imputations have called forth is totally gratuitous. If you will read what I have said with the sober judgment of an unprejudiced mind, you must surely see that I do not implicate you in my censure on Mr. Newman's apostasy. Of him and his seceding associates I have spoken in strong and, as I conceive, in just terms of reprobation. But to you my language does not, and cannot apply, unless you choose to place yourself in the same category. God forbid that I should ever be obliged to place you there! You have, in my judgment, done wrong, and you have increased that wrong by your mode of defending it. But I have nowhere intimated that you have actually reached his abyss of awful apostasy. I have indeed said that you have written in such a strain as to induce my suspicion of your unsoundness with respect to the principles of the Reformation. I have said that you have expressed yourself "precisely as you might be expected to do, if you were already near to the point of resolving on your secession," &c. And such, if I am not greatly mistaken, will be the opinion of all your readers who are capable of forming an unbiassed decision. Still all this is far from the point of *actual* and *proved* apostasy.

You may be on the same road which Mr. Newman travelled, and yet be still safe from the dreadful plunge which he has taken. Your character for morality, for amiable deportment, for the pure and punctual discharge of every domestic and social duty, for liberality, zeal, and charity to the poor, I am glad at all times to acknowledge. And Mr. Newman stands as high in all these respects as any man living, in addition to which he is a master of many extraordinary endowments in talents and in learning. Yet all this did not save him from the sin of his apostasy, nor from the judgment which every true Churchman pronounces upon his fall. My deep and earnest solicitude that you might be found firm in the faith was my sole motive for writing as I have done, and for exerting all my poor ability to extract from you some positive statement, by which you might clear away all doubt, and be distinctly acknowledged as a champion for orthodoxy against the perilous errors of Rome. And if my well-meant efforts to bring you to this point have failed, and the mist in which your position has become involved still continues, however truly and earnestly I may deplore the fact, yet I have pronounced and now pronounce nothing upon the issue. It is your own choice and not mine, that you should have your principles doubted for an instant. And happy shall I be when the fog is dissipated, and you stand once more, as a true and determined Churchman, in the clear light of day. May God mercifully bring you to that result, and save you from even the appearance of justifying the course of Mr. Newman.

In this connexion, too, I must notice your misapprehension of my reference to my pecuniary relations to you. I cannot conceive by what intellectual process you could have imagined that I had made "personal remarks as *unjust to you and the friend associated with you, as they were unworthy of myself.*" If you read my letter again, you will see no "unjust remarks," and nothing "unworthy" of any man, who wishes to remind his former friend that he has not forgotten his obligations. In the mere purchase of my library, &c. at sheriff's sale, there was nothing extraordinary. The price was sufficiently low to make the investment a safe one. But in allowing them to remain with me, there was much *kindness*, and I desired you to understand that I remembered it well. What is there unjust or unworthy in this? You say that the transaction did not cross your mind for a moment, when you expressed your doubts as to my being in earnest with respect to you. And had I not also said that "I could not suppose your opinion of your bishop was so low, as to think that he would suffer his personal obligations to weaken his sense of official duty?" Plainly then, I excluded the very idea which you have so strangely affixed to that portion of my letter. I wanted you to know that although you had thought fit to tell me, (not very "reverently,") that you did not think me in earnest, yet I acquitted you of having done so on account of what you had kindly performed as a personal

friend some years ago. The property is not mine, but yours. It is safe, and may be resumed by the rightful owners at any time. The favor conferred on me by the loan of it was unsolicited and unexpected by me, and whenever it is withdrawn I shall certainly have no reason to complain. But the *kindness* of the act I do not design to forget, and I have been always prompt to acknowledge it to others, as I have done on this occasion to you. And I am sorry, as well as surprised that you should have thought fit to attach to my remark the epithets of "unjust" and "unworthy," the more especially as you involve "the friend" who furnished half the investment, in my supposed offence,—as if I could possibly intend to treat his character with the slightest disrespect, or be insensible to his many proofs towards me and mine, of friendship and generous liberality.

But I pass on to your answers and explanations. And first, you admit that you purchased six copies of the "Ursuline Manual," a Roman Catholic book, skilfully prepared for the use of Romanists, and well adapted to inveigle and ensnare others who are not on their guard against the delusions of their false and dangerous system. You say, however, that "the transaction was purely a private one, unconnected with either your personal or official character, and should have been presumed to be right until fairly shown to be wrong." You further say that these books were not designed for the use of the members of our Church, and that the whole affair was sufficiently explained by you to Mr. Perry, as the Rector of your late Parish. And you conclude by expressing your trust that "this matter is satisfactorily set at rest."

Now as Mr. Perry is not your bishop, and as your explanation to him has not been vouchsafed to me, I have nothing to remark on that part of your reply. With respect to the rest, you cannot surely suppose that I can call it a fair or reasonable answer. You might have occasion for one copy of such a book, to satisfy your own curiosity, but in buying *six*, every man of common sense must believe that you intended them for distribution, unless you would have it taken for granted that you bought them for the same purpose that induced the Roman Bishop to buy up Tindal's edition of the Bible,—to put the books in the fire. If it was a *private* transaction, (which no one doubts, for how could it be otherwise ?) but yet not connected with your *personal* or *official* character, the question naturally arises: Have you any other character, which is neither personal nor official? And if they were not intended for members of our Church, am I to understand that it is lawful for you, directly or indirectly, privately or publicly, to disseminate Romish books through other portions of the community around you? My dear brother, it is not possible for you to call these statements satisfactory. Throughout them all you keep back the real answer. And until you can give *that*,—until you can tell me, not what you did *not* intend to do with those books,

but what you have actually intended and done with them,—you cannot complain that the transaction should expose you to great and serious suspicion.

On the second point, your ceasing to exercise your ministry, your last explanation is sufficient. But my mistake grew necessarily out of the language used by yourself in your first letter. If you spoke of having done what in fact you had not done, the error was your own. I am quite ready to admit, however, that it was only a verbal inaccuracy, and willingly accept the account which you now furnish, as satisfactory.

The third point concerns the original charge of your having gone, on the Lord's day, out of my own church in Burlington, before the services were over, taking your place in the midst of a Roman Catholic congregation, "conforming to their usages," and remaining "as a respectful and attentive listener" to the close of their Vesper service. You say that you did not go to be a worshipper, but outwardly conformed to their mode, because you would not give offence to their feelings by an unseemly singularity, and you compare it to the case of a visit to any other body of worshipping Christians, declaring that our Church makes no difference between the Church of Rome and other religious communities, or if she does, the difference is in favor of Rome, "as having the apostolic succession and ministry and as being an integral Church, while the others have no such ministry, and at best are only individual members of Christ's Church by virtue of their baptism." And you likewise say that you had no intention of offending, and that if, under the circumstances, your brethren should see fit to condemn you, you will submit unresistingly and uncomplainingly, to your sentence. But you carefully avoid the slightest expression of regret for the alarm and trouble which you have occasioned by your conduct. You see no inconsistency in the act itself, nor, for aught that I can discover, is there the least intimation that you are not ready to do the same thing again, whenever you think proper.

But I cannot in duty and conscience permit the truly apostolic Church to which I belong to be injured and misjudged by a silent acquiescence in such flagrant inconsistency. I utterly deny that the Church makes no difference between Rome, and the "religious communities around her." I value the apostolic succession, as being essential to the regular ordination of the ministry, but I totally repudiate the notion that the Church esteems the ministry as of more importance than the faith which they teach. The truth of the Gospel of Christ is "the treasure" committed to the priesthood, whom St. Paul calls "earthen vessels," to be valued for the sake of that which they contain. And it is for the truth's sake which is held and preached in the various orthodox congregations around us, that the Church has always allowed her clergy to bid them welcome to her communion, and has placed no formal barrier in the way

of our ministers and people uniting with them occasionally, in prayer and praise. The Church of Rome, on the contrary, has poisoned the very truth which she retains by a multitude of errors, propounded as matters of essential faith. She utters anathema upon anathema against us, cursing us over and over again, because we prefer the pure doctrine of the apostles to her pestiferous inventions. The whole work of the blessed Reformation was directed against her, and her alone. Our Articles of Religion were chiefly formed to guard us from her corruptions. Her worship is so defiled with prayers to the Virgin and the saints, that our Reformers would have gone to the stake, sooner than be seen outwardly and apparently conforming to its falsehood. And I am grieved and amazed at every instance where men, instructed in all this during their studies for the ministry, and ordained, like yourself, under the assurance of fidelity to our doctrines and our system, can gravely argue for the liberty of breaking down the wall of separation which the true Gospel of Christ has erected between us and Rome,—that blood-stained Church, which sacrificed our forefathers in the martyr-fires of Oxford and London, and would hardly spare their posterity, I fear, if they again possessed their ancient power.

But you did not, as you say, go to worship; you only acted outwardly as if you were worshipping! My dear brother, I beseech you to ask your own good sense whether such an excuse extenuates the error. What do you call an act like that, but a solemn mockery? Does it become a minister of Christ to go into a worshipping assembly, and *seem* to worship in the eyes of men, while he does not mean to worship in the sight of God? And how does this “mental reservation,”—this secret intention not to worship,—prevent the scandal to your own Church? For men could not read your thoughts, they could only see your actions; and far more to your credit would it be that they should suppose you were doing what you *seemed* to do, rather than believe that you were only acting a part of hypocrisy for that particular occasion.

Again you say, in your first letter, that you had no book and took no part in the offices. But what am I to understand by a remark like this? Do we not all know that the congregation, in the Roman Church, are not expected to take any part in the offices, which are all confined to the priest and his assistants around the altar? Do we not all know that these offices are in Latin? And although, in Protestant countries, they have been obliged to furnish the laity with translations of their services, yet it would be an impertinent act of disorder in any of the congregation to utter one word of them, since the responses made by the assistants would be in one language, and the responses by the people would be in another. Besides all this, we know that the bulk of their laity cannot read, so that all they could expect from you, or from each other, is precisely what you gave them,—conformity to their external acts, postures, &c.,

being all in fact that the nature of their worship outwardly allows to their people. Most extraordinary does it seem to me, therefore, that you should speak of your having no book and not joining in the offices, as if we imagined that their worship was like our own "Common Prayer," in one common language, expressly designed for the full participation of the entire assembly. On the whole, therefore, I can see nothing in your last statement to change the opinion I have already expressed, that your visit to the Roman Catholic chapel was "scandalous," because directly calculated to give rise to scandal; "disorderly," because contrary to all our rules of order; against the plain intent and meaning of our General Canon respecting the mode of keeping the Lord's day, and highly blameable as setting an open evil example to our ministry and people. Your arguments in extenuation, as I have already shown, make the matter rather worse than better, and I dare not suffer such an act to pass unrebuked, unless I were content to become an accessory to the error.

It only remains that I notice your declining to answer the eight questions which I presented, copied from the list of inquiries put by the bishops, severally as well as jointly, to the Professors of the General Seminary in A. D. 1844, and answered by those Professors with respect and promptitude. You tell me that the Church tolerates all the parties within her pale, that she does not require her ministers to define their position, and that you do not think she will countenance her bishops in making such a requisition. You then proceed to a declaration of your own correctness in general terms, and you disclaim having done aught which the church condemns, or having in any way, by circulating books or otherwise, publicly or privately, taught or recommended what could do her injury. Now this last disclaimer sounds very well, but it is totally wide of the point in question. For the Church commits the practical administration of her system to her bishops, and obliges her presbyters "reverently to obey the godly admonitions" of these bishops, and "submit to their godly judgments." The Church obliges these bishops to "use wholesome discipline," and to "banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's Word." The Church requires these bishops to inquire into the truth of all evil reports concerning her ministers, and on them, as the official judges in all questions arising under her system, she rests the burden of the highest and most solemn responsibility. But all this you disregard. You have made yourself the subject of evil report, and deny your bishop's right to make inquiry. You set your judgment above the judgment of your bishop, and practically, in the words of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, you charge him with "taking too much upon him." You undertake to know the doctrines and system of the Church better than he whom the Providence of God has placed over you. And the very same questions which the Professors of the Seminary answered without dispute or hesitation, you

refuse to answer, except in such a loose and general way as virtually amounts to no answer at all. Now all this I am compelled distinctly to censure, because it is in the face of the obedience promised in the ordination vow, because it obstructs the administration committed to the bishop's office, because it sets an example of absolute insubordination and contempt, and renders the government of the diocese an idle mockery.

To show how completely nugatory the general answers are, which you give me instead of the specific ones required, I would only remind you that the extreme Oxford-Tractarian party in the Church maintain our substantial unity of doctrine with the Church of Rome, explain the Thirty-nine Articles, according to the principles of Tract No. 90, in their *non-natural* sense, so as to make them consist with the Council of Trent, deny the necessity and the benefits of the Reformation, vilify the doctrine of Justification by Faith as a Lutheran heresy, and conceive that the spiritual welfare of the Church would be promoted by her return to a formal union with Rome, as speedily as possible. A man belonging to that party, therefore, might do all in his power to disseminate Romanism, and yet profess, in general terms, that he never had, in any way, taught, said or done anything to injure the Church, because his peculiar notions are so influenced by this Tractarian hypothesis that he has brought himself to think **UNITY WITH ROME TO BE THE CHURCH'S BEST AND HIGHEST INTEREST.** True, thanks be to God! such deluded dreamers are but a small body in comparison with the mass of our sound and loyal multitude. But they exist notwithstanding. They are active, talented, energetic, and far more powerful to obstruct if not destroy our usefulness and influence in advancing the Kingdom of Christ, than all our outward foes together. How far you accord with them I have endeavored vainly to ascertain, for you put all precise inquiry at defiance. And therefore it results that your position must continue doubtful and suspicious, until other events or your own final declarations determine the question.

And now, my dear brother, with feelings of profound sorrow and disappointment, I close my painful correspondence with you in relation to this matter. I had hoped that you would have cheerfully consented to my proposition, that you would have given me a plain acknowledgment of your public error, in openly going to unite in *seeming* worship with the Roman Church, with a promise that you would not repeat it, at least until you might be a traveller in foreign parts, far from the services of your own communion, where you could avail yourself of a traveller's privilege without scandal or suspicion, and that you would thus have relieved me from the distressing necessity of an act of public and official censure. Of this proposition, however, you take no notice, and evidently consider it as totally inadmissible. In every possible mode within my

power I have labored to show you what I firmly believe your own duty, your future welfare, the happiness of your family and the interests of Christ's Church required at your hands, until, wearied and exhausted, I give up the ungrateful and useless task, with no other consolation than the consciousness of having endeavored to fulfil my obligations as your bishop, to the best of my humble ability. Until you return to a better mind, therefore, I must hold you justly subject to official censure, for I may not disregard the apostle's command to the bishop of Ephesus: "Let no man despise thee."

That you may yet be enabled to see your error, and be induced to repair all the evil and dissipate all the anxious doubts produced by your late course, may God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Your afflicted but faithful friend and brother,

(Signed,)

JOHN H. HOPKINS.

Rev. WM. H. HORT.

P. S. A copy of my Pastoral Letter with our correspondence will be sent to you, as soon as it issues from the press. And I shall allow you ample time for any further communication which you may choose to make, before I prepare my address to the diocese.

THIS tedious and unsatisfactory correspondence being thus brought to a conclusion, I now resume my address to you, my beloved and respected brethren, the Laity of the diocese. The substance of the letters, as I have already said, might have been compressed into a very narrow compass, and some matters not strictly relevant might have been omitted, if I had not been persuaded, after due reflection, that the only way in which I could be sure of avoiding the possibility of misrepresentation, was to present the whole case precisely as it occurred, and thus leave no room for the suspicion of the slightest unfairness or inaccuracy. Three full weeks have been allowed for any additional matter on the part of the Rev. Mr. Hoit, but no further communication has been sent from him, beyond the simple message that he duly received my last letter. The entire transaction is therefore placed, in its complete length and breadth, before you.

It will not be necessary, under these circumstances, that I should trouble myself or you by any recapitulation of the facts or the arguments, as these lie all on the face of the correspondence. The prominent items on which I rest my official censure are the following:—

First, I censure the act of the Rev. William Henry Hoit, in going into a worshipping assembly of Roman Catholics, and signing himself in their holy water with the sign of the cross, and in all other respects conforming outwardly to their

superstitious and idolatrous ritual. You must have observed that while he does not give me any *specific* answer with regard to his crossing himself with holy water, he admits it substantially by stating that he "conformed to their usages," without making any exception. Now this is one of their invariable usages, and therefore I am obliged to consider him as conforming to it along with the rest. You will further observe that he does not state his visit to have been one of mere curiosity. I was desirous to have so considered it, not because I think that would have excused it altogether, but because it would have presented the matter in a less serious light. But he terms it a visit of "interest," &c., (see his first letter, dated February 20th,) and plainly holds himself at perfect liberty to do the same thing again, whenever he thinks proper. The acts themselves, as well as the defence presented, I am compelled to pronounce highly censurable.

Secondly, I censure his disregard for the opinions of myself and his other brethren in Burlington, when he was distinctly informed that his conduct had been the occasion of scandal against the Church, of uneasiness, and alarm, and sorrow. He expresses no regret for having produced all this. He scouts the evil reports as "idle gossip." He refuses to make any promise that he will not repeat the same cause of offence. And thus, while he displays the utmost tenderness towards the feelings of Roman Catholics, by carefully conforming to their crossing with holy water, and kneeling down with them as if to pray to the Virgin Mary and the Saints, he exhibits the most marked indifference towards the character of the Church, and the feelings of those with whom his vows of Christian faith and ministerial ordination had connected him.

Thirdly, I censure his denial of his bishop's right to inquire into his conduct and his principles. He stands under two solemn promises of obedience to his diocesan, and since he had made himself the subject of much evil report, as one who was generally suspected of a strong leaning towards Romanism, he could not lawfully refuse to answer any question

which his bishop thought it necessary to ask, for the purpose of re-establishing his own ministerial character.

Fourthly, I censure his purchase of six copies of the Ursuline Manual, which it was impossible for him to use in any supposable way, consistent with his ministerial duty to his own Church. His refusal to give any account of the purpose for which he intended them, strengthens the ground for apprehension that no reason could be assigned for such a purchase, capable of being reconciled with the ordinary rules of clerical obligation.

The prevailing style and temper of his letters can be reconciled by no management that I can imagine, either with the tenor of his ordination vow, or with the respect due to his bishop's superior station, or even with the ordinary consideration which youth owes to age, and inexperience to experience. But I pass all this by, because it is chiefly personal to myself, and because I make large allowances for the influences which surround him, derived partly from his wealth, and the spirit of insubordination which it is but too apt to engender, partly from the many examples of recklessness which the course of others has of late years exhibited, and partly from the general character of contempt towards all established authority which marks so strongly the age we live in.

In the case before us, we behold, so far as I have yet been informed, the first example of a presbyter of our Church, choosing to exhibit, so openly and unreservedly, a course which, if it were suffered to pass without rebuke, would inevitably create the impression that we have virtually forsaken the principles of the Reformation, and lost all our old repugnance to the corruptions of the Church of Rome. It is, indeed, in perfect harmony with the result so long aimed at by the deduced writers of the Oxford Tracts, and at this moment actively recommended by a few able but strangely misguided men, on both sides of the Atlantic. Of the personal virtues and accomplishments of those individuals, I have no disposi-

tion to speak in language of the slightest disparagement ; and to the merits of the Rev. Mr. Hoit himself, in all other respects, I am ready to bear the most favorable testimony. But no words can express my amazement at their error, in supposing that these Romanizing tendencies can be reconciled with their vows of ministerial fidelity to our own Church. Nor will any consideration of human expediency, I humbly trust, ever prevent my denouncing this error, as pregnant with the most destructive consequences to the character of every clergyman who adopts it, and sure to produce, in the end, if it were possible it should prevail, the total subversion amongst us of those pure doctrines of the Gospel, derived from the Scriptures of divine truth, for which our blessed Reformers were willing to follow the steps of their glorious Master to prison and to death.

But in vain shall I, as your bishop, discharge the ungrateful and afflicting duty which my office requires, if you, my brethren of the Laity, do not fulfil your share of the common responsibility. For the Church is one body, and can only act efficiently when it is animated by the same spirit. Earnestly and affectionately, therefore, do I call upon you to examine the subject, and form your own decision for yourselves. Read over the Articles of our Religion, and the ordination vows which your ministers are obliged to take upon them. Reflect on the nature of the episcopal government, which is appointed with express reference to the soundness and efficiency of the clergy, on the sure principle that so long as the clergy are right, the people cannot be in danger of being perverted by false doctrine. And ask yourselves whether you would be willing to see your ministers leaving their own Church, even on the Lord's day, and going into a Romish chapel, and crossing themselves with holy water, and kneeling down with the blind worshippers of the Virgin and the saints, and purchasing Romish books by the half dozen, and flatly refusing to submit to the authority of their bishop, and denying his right to make inquiry

into their doctrine and their principles, when his sole purpose in doing so was merely to recall them to their sense of duty, to vindicate their character from suspicion and evil report, and to restore to them the confidence of that community which they are solemnly bound to instruct, according to the truth of Christ, both by precept and example. In the case of the Rev. Mr. Hoit, this serious question is now placed plainly before you. And I have no fear that your answer to it will not be substantially in accordance with my own.

In taking this mode, my brethren, of rebuking the errors in question, my main object has not been so much the exercise of any discipline which could be strictly called judicial; but rather the warning of the Church, and the vindication of her true principles and character, in my official capacity, as the chief watchman and overseer of the diocese. I am well convinced that the false and delusive system popularly called *Puseyism*, (but more properly *Romanism in disguise*) is the root of all these aberrations; and that it needs nothing so much as the decided and intelligent disapprobation of our Laity, to put it down effectually, by the blessing of God, and force it to retreat into its original darkness. In the confident hope that you will sustain your share in the work, which this new and insidious principle of mischief has devolved upon me, I have endeavored to discharge my unwelcome task without reserve, indeed, but yet, I trust, without severity: content to bear, as thousands of better men have borne before me, the blame which some misguided minds may possibly try to cast upon my course, and mainly solicitous to commit my efforts in defence of the doctrine and order of Christ's Church to HIM WHO JUDGETH RIGHTEOUSLY. A few years more, at farthest, will bring me before His tribunal; and should it indeed be the fact,—which the Lord, of his mercy, forbid—that the adversary of our souls succeeds in spreading the poison of Romanism amongst us, I humbly trust that my last hours will not be embittered by the reflec-

tion that any part of the sad result can be justly charged to my negligence or apathy.

Of the feelings of sorrow and regret with which I have found myself compelled to make this communication, I shall say but little. The Rev. Mr. Hoit was once, while a student, an inmate in my own family, where he was regarded as a son. By my hands he was ordained to the priesthood. By my hands he was united to his most estimable wife, then a member of my own congregation. For many years he has been accounted one of my highly valued presbyters and friends; nor is there an individual at this day, in the whole circle of our ministry, of whose conduct it would give me more heart-felt pain to speak in terms of censure. But I may not suffer such considerations as these to turn me aside from what I believe, in my conscience, to be a solemn duty: for of all men, a Christian bishop is least excusable, if he shrinks from bearing the cross in the service of his divine Master.

And now, my beloved brethren, I affectionately commend you to the favor and protection of the Most High, with my earnest prayer that the Lord of all truth and grace may guide, preserve, and bless you, strengthen you to maintain the pure principles of truth derived through our reformers from the apostolic Church of Christ, make you steadfast pillars of his kingdom upon earth, and prepare you to become the rejoicing heirs of his kingdom in Heaven.

Your faithful brother and servant in Christ,

(Signed)

JOHN H. HOPKINS,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF VERMONT.

BURLINGTON, VT. April 13th, 1846.



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